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ABSTRACT

Vision is an important dimension in the leadership characteristics of school administrators. This dimension can be expressed in a 2-phased process: the development of both personal and organizational visions. How this vision is developed, however, in school administrators is difficult to answer. This study looks at the development of personal vision in school administrators. Data were collected from 158 elementary principals and 243 assistant principals from Ankara, Turkey. Self-evaluations of proficiencies, self-development fields, leadership styles, professional values, and schools were determined. Differences occurred between principals and assistant principals in determining proficiencies, self-development fields, and leadership styles. Differences were nonexistent in determining school climate, school-community relationships, the pressure of superior administrators, and discipline. These results are compared to the requirements of 21st century education. (Contains 18 references.) (DFR)

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Personal Visions of the Administrators in the Turkish Elementary Schools for the 21st Century

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Abstract

Vision is an important dimension in the leadership characteristics of school administrators. This important dimension expresses a two-phased process, the development of personal and organizational visions. Our knowledge about the competence related to the vision development of school administrators employed at present is insufficient. In this study, the personal phase of the vision development process was performed. The data were collected from 158 principals and 243 assistant principals employed in elementary schools located in the borders of metropolitan municipality of Ankara in Turkey. The self-evaluations of above-mentioned administrators about their proficiencies, self development fields, leadership styles, professional values and schools were determined. The principals and assistant principals are different from each other in determining their proficiencies, self development fields, and leadership styles. They seem to be a homogenous group in determining the climate of schools, the school-community relationships, the pressure of superior administrators and the discipline. The results of the study indicated that the vision development potentials of school principals were found valuable for the 21st. century.

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PERSONAL VISIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATORS IN THE TURKISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FOR THE 21st. CENTURY

1. INTRODUCTION

The researcher tries to bring and adopt vision and vision development into the field of education administration. She has been searching personal and organizational vision developments from the administrators of elementary schools to faculty and universities for two years. The research related with the faculty and university administrator is a co-study and the research related with the elementary school administrators is the study of the writer performed and completed by herself. In the following subtitles, at first the vision is defined and the extent of the vision is discussed and then the process of vision development is given.

2. KEY TO RECREATE FUTURE : VISION

The literature in the field provides many definitions of vision. For example, Shieve and Shoenheit [1] regard vision as '' the blueprint of a desired state ''. Hickman and Silva [2] indicate '' vision is the journey from the known to the unknown.....creating the future from a montage of facts, hopes, dreams ''. In this sense, vision is explained with the following dimensions in terms of elementary school administrators.

Vision is the dream and design of future. The leader elementary school administrators with vision are people dreaming and designing the futures of their schools.

Vision is to balance dreams with realities. The leader elementary school administrators with vision evaluate the present conditions, the situations and the possibilities of their own and their schools.

Vision is to differentiate with values and to integrate them with spiritual power. The leader elementary school administrators with vision consider everything found meaningful by humans to have value and they differentiate their school with them.

Vision is to communicate and to share. The leader elementary school administrators with vision communicate their dreams, plans and values to everyone at schools from students to all teachers.

Vision is to take and manage risks and the above-mentioned dimensions contain taking and managing risks. The leader elementary school administrators with vision take and manage risks.

3. VISION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Vision development express a two-phased process, the development of personal and organizational visions [3,4].The personal vision development phase contains 1) evaluating self, 2) defining in a clear and understandable way what the leader wants to perform and realize 3) bringing up desires. The organizational vision development phase contains 1) evaluating the organization, and 2) defining the dreamed organization.

The basic functions of the education are to be leaders and raise leaders to meet the demands of the 21st.century. Achieving these basic functions depends on visionary leaders in the levels of the educational administration. Our knowledge about the extent of elementary school administrators' vision at present is insufficient. In this study, the personal phase of vision development process was performed and the extent of the personal vision of the university administrators was discussed. As a result, in this study I am going to explain what the personal visions of the elementary school administrators for the 21st.century are.

4. METHODOLOGY

4. 1. Sample

The study was designed in the survey model. The population of the study consisted of 282 principals and 1088 assistant principals employed in elementary schools located in the borders of metropolitan city of Ankara [5] All of the principals were tried to be reached and for the assistant principals, the sample range tables were used in selecting the samples [6]. In

the sample range tables, 277 of 1088 assistant principals were selected to be samples in 0.95 reliability level and .05 significance level. 158 of 282 principals and 243 of 277 assistant principals were reached .

4.2. Instrument

In this study, the questionnaire developed by Edward W. Chance was used [3]. The questionnaire contained one structured question and six open-ended questions related with the personal vision development phase. The questions are as follows:

1.What are your five greatest proficiencies ?

2.What are your five greatest self-development fields?

3.What are the three things you most value in your professional life?

4.What style of leadership are you most comfortable with?

a) Structural b) Facilitating

c) Supportive d) Participative

5.What are the most important things you want to accomplish in your school?

6.What do you want to change in your school as an administrator?

7.How would you like to be remembered as an administrator?

4.3. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, we considered that all of 158 principals and of all 243 assistant principals would give the maximum responses for every item. The total number of the questions was considered and this number was multiplied with the probable number of the responses. For example, for items 1 and 2 the expected total number of the responses would be 158x 5 = 790 and 243 x 5 = 1215. Similar responses were grouped and frequencies were computed. The rates of the items were put into order from high to low. The same process was applied for items 3,5,6 and 7.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. The Proficiencies of The Elementary School Administrators

Elementary school administrators stated 44 different proficiencies that they had. They were arranged from high to low according to their frequencies and percentages and the most important five of them are given (Table 1).

Table 1. The Proficiencies of The Elementary School Administrators

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158x5=790			243x5=1215		
The Proficiencies	f	%	The Proficiencies	f	%
Being hardworking	95	12.03	Being Motivative	92	7.57
Leadership	85	10.63	Being action-Oriented	90	7.41
Honesty	56	7.09	Obeying the rules	89	7.33
Truthness	43	5.44	Discipline	85	7.00
Fairness	36	4.56	Proficient in career	66	5.43

The findings related to the proficiencies that the elementary school administrators have can be summarized as follows:

1. 39.75 % of the school principals and 34.75 % of the assistant principals, approximately one-third of them, placed themselves in the first five proficiencies within their own groups.

2. The school principals and the assistant principals seem to be two different groups in identifying their own proficiencies.

The findings reveal that school administrators perceive themselves to have different proficiencies in number and variety. Perception differences between two groups about proficiencies can be claimed as an advantage for the success of the school. as The findings related to '' truthness'' and ''honesty'', the principals stated that they had, are supported by the findings in a study of the researcher's [7]. The study mentioned tried to identify the most important five characteristics that a school administrator, a leader, needed to have which

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were 1) truthness, 2) honesty, 3) being open minded, 4) reliability and 5) cooperation. The proficiencies that the principals claimed to have are consistent with the ethical principles such as honesty, justice etc.[8]

5.2. The Proficiencies of The Elementary School Administrators Want to Develop

The most important five proficiencies that the elementary school administrators would like to develop are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. The Proficiencies of The Elementary School Administrators Want to Develop

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158x5=790			243x5=1215		
The Proficiencies	f	%	The Proficiencies	f	%
Managerial Knowledge	78	9.87	Vision Development	68	5.60
Social behavior And protocol	75	9.49	School-environment Relations	67	5.51
Communication Skills	73	9.24	Managerial Knowledge	63	5.19
Vision development	73	9.24	Being Courageous	57	4.69
School-environment Relations	69	8.73	Knowledge of laws	55	4.53

The findings related to the proficiencies that the school administrators want to develop are as follows:

1. Among the elementary school administrators, the principals stated that they wanted to develop 21 different proficiencies and the assistant principals stated that they wanted to develop 44 different proficiencies.

2. 46.56 % of the school principals and 25.52 % of the assistant principals were gathered in the first five proficiencies within their own groups.

2. Both groups, even if they were in different importance level, were in need of developing themselves in the proficiencies of ''managerial knowledge'', ''vision development'' and ''school-environment relations''.

Findings indicate that assistant principals have a great interest and variety in proficiencies in which they would like to develop themselves compared with the school principals and form a dynamic group. The reason for this may be their career expectations to be come administrators at higher levels.

The first proficiency areas and others that the administrators want to develop are technical, humane, educational and symbolical powers forming the content of an effective educational leadership [9,10]. It is known that the subjects developing the proficiencies related to three of the five powers are crucial for the development of the school administrators required to have all the proficiencies forming the content of technical, humane, educational and symbolical powers in order to be able to reach the perfection at school. Stating the need for the development of the proficiencies related to these three powers by school administrators can be evaluated as an indication of their desires to catch the perfection. The findings provide some important clues to form the content of administrator training programs.

Evaluating the finding as a whole about the proficiencies that the administrators have and want to develop, the following points can be emphasized:

The proficiencies of ''leadership'' and ''proficiency in occupation'' that the school principals and assistant principals stated that they had, and the proficiencies '' managerial knowledge'' and ''vision development'' that they wan to develop appear to be contradictory. However, this appearance shows that these people perceive themselves positively. It can be claimed that by expressing their own strong aspects affirmatively and their weak aspects clearly, school administrators achieve self-evaluations which is one of the preconditions leadership and vision development.

5.3. Values of The Elementary School Administrators

The first three professional values which elementary school administrators take into account are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The Professional Values of The Elementary School Administrators

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158X3=474			243X3=729		
Values	f	%	Values	f	%
Being hard-working	58	11.60	Respect	69	9.47
Discipline	52	10.97	Discipline	65	8.92
Student	51	10.76	Tolerance	63	8.64

The findings related professional values of elementary school administrators can be summarized as follows:

1.Among the elementary school administrators, principals approve of 16 values and assistant principals approve of 13 values. It is understood that with the differences they generally approve of the same professional values.

2.Within their own groups, views of 33.33 % of the principals and 27.02 % of the assistant principals focused on the first three values .

In the literature, values are related to ''the nature of task '' and '' the results of the task''. The people approving the values related to '' the nature of the task'' prefer the jobs at which they would gain new knowledge and skills and reveal all the potentials. The people approving of the values of ''the results of the task'' prefer the jobs which provide some social and economic returns such as money, status and reliance etc. [11]. The administrators approve of the values related to ''the nature of the task''.

The value shared by the principals and assistant principals is ''discipline''. This findings supports the findings some other studies which revealed that in many organizations the values favoring hierarchy, power, authority and discipline are prominent [4].

Approval of the discipline as a common value can be as a consequence of social culture, the expectations of the society from school or managerial philosophy of the administrators. Administrators' approval of the values ''in the same field'', but not in the same order of importance, makes us think that they can act together as teams to develop and expand the vision. The approved and shared values in the organizations fulfill the functions of integration and motivation [12,13]. However, evaluating the findings related to the values as a whole and integrating them with the concept of vision, it can be claimed that the values such as knowledge, creativity, risk-taking should be in the systems of value of the administrators [14].

5.4. Leadership Styles of The Elementary School Administrators

The leadership styles of the school administrators in which they find themselves successful are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Leadership Styles of The Elementary School Administrators

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
Leadership Styles	f	%	Leadership Styles	f	%
Sharing	78	49.36	Sharing	161	66.25
Facilitating	31	19.62	Facilitating	39	16.04
Structural	26	16.45	Structural	31	12.75
Supportive	23	14.55	Supportive	12	4.93

The findings related to the leadership styles of the school administrators in which they find themselves successful are as follows:

1.49.36 % of the principals and 66.25 % of assistant principals favor the leadership style of '' sharing''.

2.School principals and assistant principals' ranging the leadership styles are different.

Four leadership styles defined for school principals in ''the theory of four factors'' emphasizing ''the administrative skill fields'' are 1) structural, 2) facilitating, 3) supportive and sharing [15]. Among these leadership styles they find themselves successful in the leadership style of sharing whose prominent characteristics are approaching the events with tolerance and without pre-judgment, understanding others' thoughts and involving decision making process, working effectively with individuals and groups and motivating the personnel. These characteristics are also emphasized by new leadership approaches as the characteristics that a leader is supposed to have.

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In this respect, school administrators perceived themselves positively.

However, at this stage it should be emphasized that none of these leadership styles can be claimed as ''the best'' because a successful and effective school principal is expected to choose and practice the proper leadership style(s) depending on his school, situations and conditions. Regarding the proficiencies of the administrators, it can be claimed that this expectation can match the administrative skills of the administrators with their leadership styles.

5.5. The Most Important Things The Elementary School Administrators Want to Accomplish

The first three things that school administrators want to accomplish are given in Table 5.

Table 5. The Most Important Things The Elementary School Administrators Want to Accomplish

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
Things 158X3=474	f	%	Things 243X3=729	f	%
Improving the school climate	60	12.65	Improving the school climate	94	12.98
Improving the quality education	37	7.81	Improving the quality education	53	7.27
School-environment Relations	31	6.54	School-environment Relations	53	7.27

The findings related to that school administrators want to accomplish are as follows:

1.The number of things that the principals want to accomplish is 24 and the number of things that the assistant principals want to accomplish is 23.

2.27 % of the principals and 27.43 % of the assistant principals took their place in their own groups regarding the first three subjects.

The findings revealed that the administrators agreed on climate, quality of education and school-environment relations as the problematic subjects which need to be improved. Evaluating the proficiencies (Table 2) that they want to accomplish together, they emphasized the administrative knowledge, vision development and school-environment relations which were vary similar to these three things. This also shows their desire to solve the problems in these problematic fields.

The school climate, quality of education and environmental relations can be thought as interdependent crucial variables. A school whose climate is not good enough cannot be expected to be effective, and a school which lost its health and effectiveness cannot be expected to provide a qualified education and to have good environmental relations . Therefore, Turkish Education System is criticized with its climate because of its bureaucratic characteristics which cause the schools to go away with their educational activities from life, parents, new developments, and within system, everyday new conflicts have been experienced because of the centrally organized structure [16,17,18].

5.6. The Most Important Things The Elementary School Administrators Want to Change

The first three things that elementary school administrators want to change in their schools are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. The Most Important Things The Elementary School Administrators Want to Change

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
Things 158X3=474	f	%	Things 243X3=729	f	%
School climate	62	13.08	School climate	81	11.11
Pressure of the superior administrators	36	7.59	Lack of school-environment Relations	48	6.58
Lack of school-environment Relations	34	7.17	Pressure of The superior administratos	47	6.45

The findings related to the situations that elementary school administrators want to change in their schools are presented below:

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1. The principals want to change 25 things and assistant principals want to change 24 situations in their schools.

2. 27.84 % of the principals and 24.14 % of the assistant principals shared the first three situations within their groups. Except the ''pressure of the superior administrators, they showed consistency with the changes that they want to do in their schools and on their own. It is understandable that the pressure of the superior administrators is ranked by the principals in the second order and by assistant principals in the third order. However, it is understood that for the pressure of the superior administrators is one of the problematic areas required to be changed. It can be concluded that this can a consequence of the centrally organized structure.

5.7. How The Elementary School Administrators Want to Be Remembered

The school administrators were asked to state how they would like to be remembered with one item. All responses were put into rank order. In their first preferences, the principals (25.59 %) stated to be remembered as ''a leader'' and assistant principals stated to be remembered as '' an honest person ''. These findings revealed that school principals and as administrators and as teams developed a life perspective depending on future organizational goals, individual goals and values. In this context, the evaluations that support each other in first items can be the base for this judgment.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations of the study can be summarized as follows:

1.The school principals find themselves powerful in terms of the proficiencies of being hard-working, leadership, honesty, truthness and justice. Their assistants stated their powerful aspects as being action-oriented, obeying the rules, discipline and being occupationally proficient.

2. The common proficiencies that school administrators would like to develop are knowledge of administration, vision development, and school-environment relations. The principals are willing to develop themselves in ''communication skills'', ''social behavior and protocol'', their assistants are willing to improve themselves in '' knowledge of laws'' and ''being courageous''.

3.The administrators who have positive perceptions about themselves are ready to evaluate their powerful aspects effectively to make use of them in fulfilling their duties, to identify their own weak aspects to develop and enrich them.

4. The only common value in the focus of the individual vision of school administrators is discipline .

5. The administrators define their administrative styles as ''sharing leadership''. The administrators who approve of the discipline at school as a value experience the conflict between the discipline and the values of new leadership approaches.

6.School administrators as leadership teams feel and define lack of school-environment relations, lack of the quality of education and pressure of superior administrators as the basic problems of Turkish Education.

7.With the general framework of their individual visions, school administrators appear to be potential leaders for the 21st.century.

8.This potential should be utilized in their in-service and pre-service education through the suitable programs.

9. The administrators should be equipped with adequate authority to function their leadership roles.

10. Organizational vision dimension of school administrators should be studied to complete this study theoretically.

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